

AUSTRALIA'S DSD CONFIRMS 'UKUSA' PACT AND 'ECHELON' SPYING

On 23 May, on Channel 9 TV's *Sunday* program, Australia became the first country to admit participation in a global electronic surveillance system that intercepts the private and commercial international communications of citizens and companies from its own and other countries.

The disclosure was made by Martin Brady, director of the Defence Signals Directorate (DSD) in Canberra, who acknowledged the existence of the UKUSA agreement in a letter to Channel 9, stating that the DSD "does cooperate with counterpart signals intelligence organisations overseas under the UKUSA relationship".

The DSD's main contribution is a base at Kojarena, near Geraldton in Western Australia, built in the early 1990s, where four satellite tracking dishes intercept Indian Ocean and Pacific Ocean communications satellites. Reportedly, 80 per cent of intercepts are sent automatically to the CIA or the NSA. Although it is under Australian command, the station—like its controversial counterpart at Pine Gap, central Australia—employs American and British staff in key posts.

In return, Australia can ask for information collected at other UKUSA stations via



the ECHELON system [see feature article this issue]. A second and larger, although not so technologically sophisticated, DSD satellite station has been built at Shoal Bay, near Darwin, Northern Territory, where nine dishes listen to regional communications satellites, including systems covering Indonesia and southwest Asia.

On 6 May, in Strasbourg, the Science and Technology Options Assessment Panel (STOA) of the European Parliament approved as a working document the "Interception Capabilities 2000" (IC2000) report on communications interception and

the ECHELON system. The report is therefore available for public distribution from the European Parliament office in Luxembourg, and a web version is available at website <www.gn.apc.org/duncan/stoa_cover.htm>.

(Source: Intelligence, 31 May 1999)

MOUNTAIN GLACIERS IN RAPID RETREAT

New data collected by scientists at Jawaharlal Nehru University in Delhi, India, show that glaciers in the Himalayas are retreating faster than anywhere else on Earth. Together with those on the neighbouring Tibetan mountain plateau, the Himalayan glaciers make up the largest body of ice outside the polar caps. Now there are fears that as the glaciers retreat, the meltwater

will produce catastrophic flooding as mountain lakes overflow.

"The moraine is unstable," said Syed Hasnain, the principal author of the new report. "Occasionally these lakes burst, releasing enormous amounts of water."

"All the glaciers in the middle Himalayas are retreating," said Professor Hasnain, who warns that glaciers could disappear from the central and eastern Himalayas by 2035.

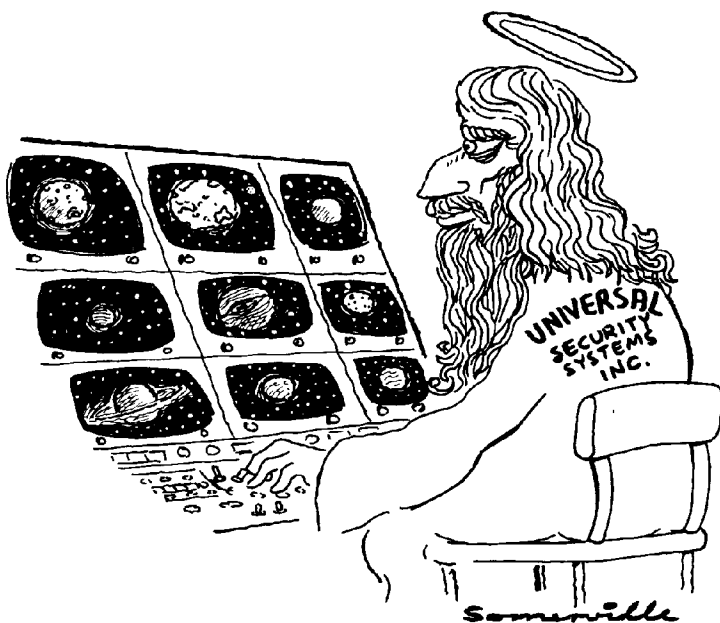
Last year, research by a team at the University of Colorado, in Boulder, revealed that mountain glaciers everywhere are in retreat. The Alps have lost about 50% of their ice in the past century, while 14 of 27 glaciers that existed in Spain in 1980 have disappeared. The largest glacier on Mt Kenya has shrunk by 8% in the last 100 years, while those on Mt Kilimanjaro are only 25% as big.

(Source: From an article by Charles Arthur, *The Independent, UK*, 8 June 1999; website <www.independent.co.uk>)

US COURT CLEARS "LOCKERBIE TRAIL" AGENT

Former US intelligence officer Lester Coleman, convicted of perjury after alleging United States complicity in the Lockerbie bombing, has been cleared by a court of appeal. Coleman, co-author of *Trail of the Octopus*, has now launched an action for US\$10 million against the US Government.

Three judges issued a sealed ruling—an unusual step—which means that not even



Coleman and his lawyers can read why they quashed his conviction. Reporting restrictions also ensured the case received little attention in the United States.

Coleman's research purports that an American intelligence-controlled drug-running operation had facilitated the loading of a bomb on Pan Am flight 103.

Coleman was ostracised by his bosses and found himself facing charges of applying for a passport in a false name and committing perjury in an action heard some years before. The passport application, he said, had been made under orders from his bosses at the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA). When he found he could not reach his superiors, he decided to flee the country. He and his family were granted political asylum in Sweden in 1990. In 1994 they moved to Spain.

The American authorities went to great lengths and huge expense to discover his whereabouts and to seek his extradition. Eventually Coleman decided in 1996 to return to the United States of his own volition to face charges. After months of imprisonment, he was released last year after a guilty plea and a fine of \$30,000. (Source: The Times, UK, 13 June 1999; <www.the-times.co.uk/news/pages/sti/99/06/13/stiscocon01001.html?1124027>)

MONSANTO PLANS TO CONTROL WATER RESOURCES

Transnational giant Monsanto has identified a new business opportunity because of the emerging water crisis and the funding available to make this vital resource available to people.

As it states in its strategy paper: "First, we believe that discontinuities (either major policy changes or major trendline breaks in resource quality or quantity) are likely, particularly in the area of water, and we will be well-positioned via these businesses [owned by Monsanto and mentioned earlier in the paper] to profit even more significantly when these discontinuities occur.

"Second, we are exploring the potential of non-conventional financing (NGOs, World Bank, USDA, etc.) that may lower our investment or provide local country business-building resources."

Thus, the crisis of pollution and depletion of water resources is viewed by Monsanto as a business opportunity. For Monsanto, "sustainable development" means the conversion of an ecological

crisis into a market of scarce resources...

(Source: From an article by physicist Vandana Shiva, published in The Hindu, New Delhi, India, 1 May 1999; posted at <www.greenbuilder.com>)

INDUSTRY-FUNDED ASPARTAME STUDIES FLAWED

Serious questions have been raised about the reliability of industry-sponsored studies of the safety of synthetic chemicals. Aspartame in particular has been the focus of significant ongoing controversy.

Studies of aspartame in the peer-reviewed medical literature were surveyed for funding source and study outcome. Of the 166 studies felt to have relevance for questions of human safety, 74 had Nutrasweet®-industry-related funding and 92 were independently funded.

One hundred per cent of the industry-funded research attested to aspartame's safety, whereas 92 per cent of the independently funded research identified problems with aspartame.

A bibliography supplied by the Nutrasweet® Company included many studies of questionable validity and relevance, with multiple instances of the same study being cited up to six times.

(Source: Dr Ralph G. Walton, The Center for Behavioral Medicine, Northside Medical Center, 500 Gypsy Lane, Youngstown, Ohio 44501, USA, e-mail <RWalton193@aol.com>)

FORMER IRS AGENT SAYS INCOME TAX IS ILLEGAL

The US Internal Revenue Service (IRS) is everything the so-called tax protesters say it is: non-responsive, unable to withstand scrutiny, tyrannical, and oblivious to the rule of law and the Constitution.

That's how Joseph Banister—a certified public accountant who, until last month,

was an investigator and gunslinger for the Criminal Investigation Division of the IRS—now regards his former employer.

His conclusion is based in part on a personal two-year investigation into the agency's history and purpose—an investigation he began somewhat reluctantly, never expecting he'd reach the conclusion he did. His research led him to question the very legality and constitutionality of the IRS.

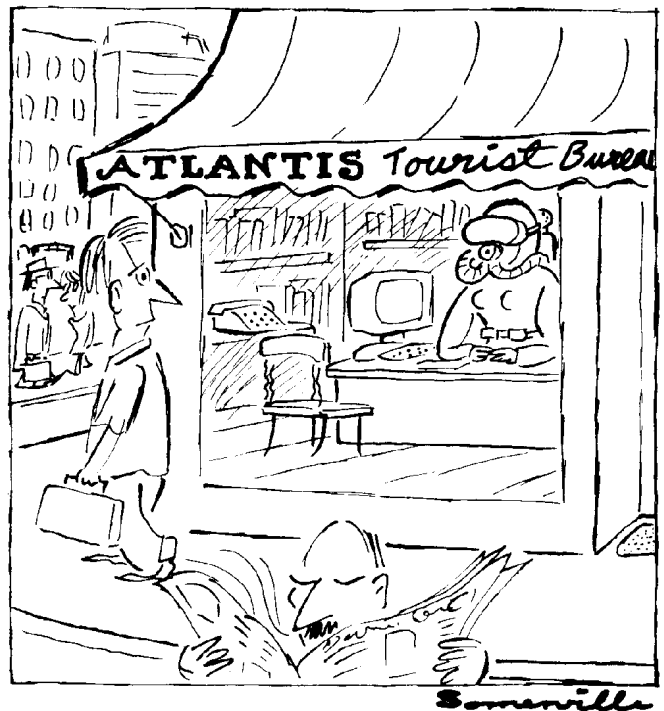
Deeply disturbed by his discoveries, he summarised these in a report which, in February, he sent to his supervisors, asking them to respond to three allegations:

1. That the filing of federal income tax returns is voluntary, and the filing of federal income tax returns is not required;
2. That the 16th Amendment to the US Constitution was never ratified;
3. That income taxes are not used to pay for daily government operations, but to pay the interest on the national debt.

"All the time I was doing my research, I looked for snags—looked for things that would prove that everything I was reading and finding out was wrong," Banister told WorldNetDaily.

"I had taken this job thinking I'd be wearing the white hat, and I slowly found out I was not wearing the white hat. So something had to change."

The change came quickly last month [February] when the IRS accepted



Banister's offer of resignation rather than respond to the questions raised. He is believed to be the first IRS-CID special agent who—having determined to his satisfaction that certain allegations about income tax were true—confronted the hierarchy at the IRS about his findings. But he has paid dearly for this.

"It's the end of my dream of a career in law enforcement," he said, recalling in a telephone interview the series of events that propelled him from the ranks of armed federal agents to the camp of those reviled by the government as tax protesters. The action also cost him his \$80,000-a-year job. (Source: From an article by Sarah Foster, *WorldNetDaily*, 26 March 1999; website <www.worldnetdaily.com>)

SPANISH PILOT CONFIRMS NATO DELIBERATELY BOMBED YUGOSLAV CIVILIANS

Captain Adolfo Luis Martin de la Hoz, who returned to Spain at the end of May after participating in the NATO bombings against Yugoslavia, says that NATO's repeated bombing of civilian and non-military targets were not the result of war "errors".

"Once there was a coded order from the North American [US] military that we should drop anti-personnel bombs over the localities of Prishtina and Nish. Our colonel refused it altogether, and a couple of days later his transfer orders came.

"The Spanish military denounces that the Spanish government not only does *not* try to inform themselves but they also accept

the false reports that are edited for them in Aviano, where there is a sort of military Press cabinet in the hands of North American generals and functionaries.

"Here they say that several operations were directed by Spanish commanders and pilots. Lies over lies. All the missions that we flew, all and each one, were planned by US high military authorities. They were all planned in great detail, including attacking planes, targets and type of ammunition that we had to use. We [the Spanish] never directed anything, and our missions were limited to flying over the borders of Macedonia, Albania, Bosnia and Slovakia.

"No journalist has the slightest idea about what is happening in Yugoslavia. They [NATO] are destroying the country, bombing it with new weapons, toxic nerve gases, surface mines dropped by parachute, bombs containing uranium, black napalm, sterilisation chemicals, sprayings to poison the crops, and weapons of which even we still do not know anything.

"The North Americans are committing one of the biggest barbarities that can be committed against humanity. A lot of very bad things will be told in the future about what was happening there, because, by the way, judging by what we talked about with the British and German officers, it was designed in order to divide the Europeans and keep us subjected for many decades." (Source: Translated from Spanish by Jelena Karovic, from the *Spanish weekly*, *Articulo 20*, no. 30, 14 June 1999; posted 17 June by John Whitley, *New World Order Intelligence Update*, <jwhitley@inforamp.net>)

PHARMACEUTICAL RESIDUES IN EUROPE'S WATER

While studying lake water for pesticide contamination, chemists at a Swiss agricultural research laboratory found an unexpected pollutant: clofibric acid, a drug for lowering cholesterol. Clofibric acid is not manufactured in Switzerland, so industrial spillage was ruled out as a cause. The chemists checked other bodies of water, including rural mountain lakes and rivers that run through cities, and found very low concentrations of the drug everywhere.

Berlin researchers also found clofibric acid in local waters: "It laced some groundwater at concentrations of up to 4 milligrams per litre, or 4 parts per billion (ppb)... It also turned up in all the Berlin tap water they sampled—at up to 0.2 ppb."

Once they started looking, European researchers found lipid-lowering drugs, analgesics (including ibuprofen and diclofenac), beta-blocker heart drugs, chemotherapy drugs, antibiotics, and hormones in water bodies that supply drinking water. Higher concentrations were found in more populated areas. Having ruled out industrial spillage, researchers realised that the drugs had come from human body wastes.

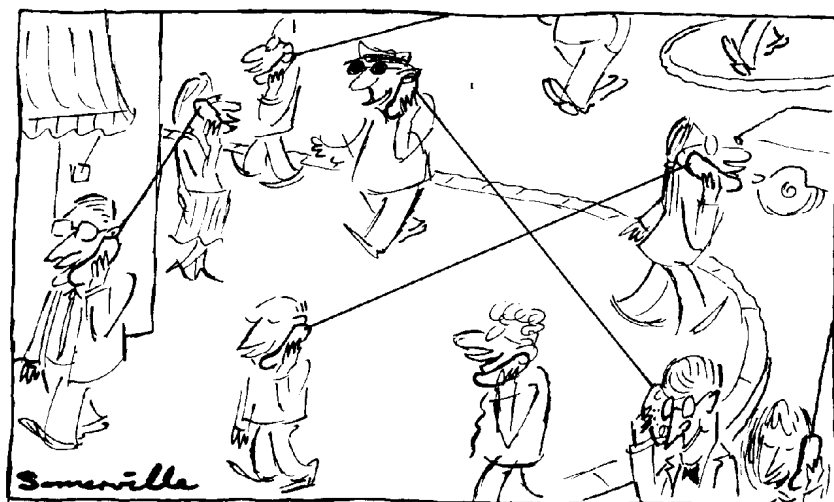
How much of a drug gets broken down by the body varies depending on the drug and on the individual. As much as 50% to 90% of a medicine, in its original form, may be excreted from the body. Sometimes, chemical reactions with the environment turn partly degraded drugs back into an active form.

No one knows what the concentrations are in US waters, because no one is looking. The FDA does not require that water supplies be monitored to see if pharmaceutical concentrations match manufacturers' estimates.

Stuart Levy, who directs the Center for Adaptation Genetics and Drug Resistance at Tufts University (Boston, Mass.), has said that antibiotics at a parts-per-trillion concentration can affect *Escherichia coli* and other bacteria.

Meanwhile, Swiss researchers have found 0.5 micrograms per litre of fluoroquinolone antibiotics in sewage-treatment-plant water—1,000 times higher than the parts-per-trillion figure to which Levy refers.

(Source: Extract from "Drugged Waters" by Janet Raloff, published in *Townsend Letter for Doctors & Patients*, no. 192, July 1999)



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CORPORATE SOLDIERS

— Privatising the Use of Force —

After having privatised in whole or part nearly all other government functions, the US Government is now outsourcing the use of force. The latest stage in the privatisation of military functions is the contracting-out of training of Third World armies.

The Department of State has turned to Military Professional Resources, Inc. (MPRI), of Arlington, Virginia—a self-described "corporation of former military professionals...ranging from commanders to tank gunners"—to carry out its African Crisis Responsive Initiative (ACRI). At State Department prodding, seven nations spanning the African continent have already signed up for the program.

The ostensible purpose of ACRI is to create an indigenous peacekeeping force in Africa. Military forces from nearly all of the seven nations currently participating—Benin, Ghana, Malawi, Mali, Senegal, Uganda and, most recently, the Ivory Coast—have already received some training from the 3rd Special Forces based at Fort Bragg, North Carolina.

Why use a private corporation to conduct military training? Government officials say privatisation can save taxpayers money. In the case of ACRI, the State Department says MPRI and LOGICON (a huge Arlington-based electronics company) can do the advanced training more cheaply, and more effectively, than the Army.

But whatever the cost savings, the privatisation of military and quasi-military functions raises huge questions of accountability and the misuse of force that are sure to loom large as MPRI and other military service companies like South Africa's Executive Outcomes and the United States' DynCorp grow.

PRIVATISED PEACEKEEPING

Some of the potential dangers even in a privatised peacekeeping training operation are foreseeable in the still-in-its-infancy ACRI program and in MPRI's former operations.

The State Department is quick to emphasise that the ACRI program does not transfer lethal equipment, but quality training by definition builds a residual lethal force—soldiers—and can alter regional balances of power. MPRI, whose motto is "The Greatest Corporate Military Expertise in the World", has provided clear illustration of the value of good teachers.

Within months of receiving expert tutelage from MPRI, Croatia launched a series of intense, well-planned and successful offensives against ethnic Serbs. Military experts noted that the Croatian military machine was vastly improved in just a few short months—an upgrade that likely contributed to its decision to go on the offensive.

Before MPRI entered the picture, ACRI had already begun compiling a similar record. Uganda and Senegal, each of which received Special Forces trainers as part of ACRI's initial deployment in July 1996, have become deeply involved in wars with bordering nations.

ACRI equipment has been found on Ugandan soldiers fighting against Kabila in the Congo. Human rights groups, such as Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International, have also linked ACRI-trained battalions to murders, rapes and beatings committed against Ugandan civilians in areas of the country contested by rebels. Senegal is supporting Guinea-Bissau rebels against the authoritarian General Asumaric Mane.

COURTING PRIVATE WAR-MAKERS

The foil to MPRI has been Executive Outcomes (EO), a Pretoria-based firm founded in 1989. EO's speciality was mobilising highly trained veterans of South Africa's counterinsurgency wars to reverse the odds in deadly engagements elsewhere on the continent. Its public relations strategy was to portray the company as a convenient shot-in-the-arm for besieged democracies. In reality, the firm's activities largely consisted of propping up governments amenable to the continued outbound flow of Africa's rich mineral wealth.

Heritage-Branch, the oil and mining combine of British investor Tony Buckingham, had an intentionally obscured interlocking directorate with EO. Heritage-Branch has mining interests in countries such as Angola and Sierra Leone—two countries in which EO has spent violent time.

On 1 January 1999, Executive Outcomes disbanded. Nico Palm, EO's owner, put a clean face on the demise of the firm, commenting in a press statement that "African countries are busy working out solutions in Africa". Another EO statement cites "the consolidation of law and order across the African continent" as a reason for the company's purported obsolescence.

But given the mind-numbing quantity of blood being spilled across the continent,

these explanations ring hollow. Almost all serious commentators agree that Executive Outcomes is simply breaking itself into less identifiable parts, and will continue its dark work, using other countries as bases.

At a December 1998 seminar in Johannesburg, on the privatisation of security services in Africa, Princeton University Professor Jeff Herbst described EO as a "virtual firm" set to "mutate" into a less visible, but still potent, organisation.

Professor Herbst's contention appears well-grounded. At least two organisations developed by EO are still alive: Saracen, in Uganda (part-owned by President Museveni's half-brother, defence minister Sahni Saleh), and Lifeguard Security, in Sierra Leone.

PEACEKEEPING/WAR-MAKING BLUR

There is clearly a growing market for corporate logistics and quasi-peacekeeping services. The largest firms filling this market niche are DynCorp, based in Reston, Virginia, and Betac, of Alexandria, Virginia. They both construct physical and electronic infrastructures and, in most cases, offer personnel to fill them.

DynCorp, with 17,500-plus employees, over 550 operating facilities around the world and annual revenues of more than US\$1.3 billion, is particularly massive and is one of the Pentagon's largest contractors. DynCorp's services are also integrated into the Drug Enforcement Agency, the Department of Justice, the Environmental Protection Agency, the Federal Communications Commission, the Internal Revenue Service and the Treasury Department.

AVOIDING ACCOUNTABILITY

For the United States, the crucial benefits of privatised military services are lessened scrutiny of its foreign activities and a level of disassociation from activities it deems unpleasant necessities. With the US populace particularly averse to having nationals fight and die in foreign quagmires, the idea of outsourcing peacekeeping activities is especially attractive to the US military establishment. The State Department and the Department of Defense both gain because the capture or murder of contractors carries almost no political fallout.

Look for MPRI, DynCorp and friends to do well in future years.

(Source: From an article by Daniel Burton-Rose and Wayne Madsen, published in *Multinational Monitor*, March 1999; website <www.essential.org/monitor/monitor.html>)